Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD)

Accessibility - Closing the Gap

Friday 6 November, 2020 - 11:30-13:00 UTC

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GERRY ELLIS: Let's go then. Good morning, good evening, good afternoon, good night from wherever you are in the world from Gerry Ellis here in Dublin Ireland, welcome to the DCAD Session at IGF 2020, our strange be world of 2020 where everything is virtual. We're going to jump over to Judith Hellerstein who will quickly tell us who is here and then have a few words to say

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: This is Judith Hellerstein for the record. Thank you so much. Gerry. We would love to be in Dublin drinking sider and we would love to be in Poland, but it is not to be.

We have today 27 attendees and then an additional 17 who are panelists, which includes our international sign language interpreters and then one of our panelists also has their own interpreter. So welcome, everyone.

We don't have time, because of the large number of attendees to call them all out, but we'll record all the names and they'll be in our records. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Thank you for that. We'll have that list and we'll post it at a later date. Today is an important day. It's the DCAD's 14th Session, 14th IGF as far as I know. I was at one back as far as 2009 but there was one at least before that, so it's been going on a long time. We kept that pressure up. The IGF stands for the Internet Governance Forum. We all know what the Internet is, but of course we're also talking about the services and applications that are on the Internet, and we're also talking about the tools for building and using the Internet, so it's not just the Internet itself but it's all things about and around the Internet. Governance is not just about international legislation, it's not just about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and it is about all issues that give equitable access to the Internet, its products, and its services to everyone, and that's what we are here as a group, the Dynamic Coalition for Accessibility and Disability to promote and push as hard as we can. Without any ado, I would like to just get going and get this thing started because we're not here to listen to me, so we're here to -- we're here to hear you talk. So first I'm going to hand it over to Gunela in Australia that will tell us about some steps that allowed other people to join who may not have always been able to. Gunela.

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Gerry. Thank you for taking on the facilitation of this DCAD meeting today. I'm delighted to be part of it and to be speaking with you, and in particular about the DCAD IGF Participation Support Grants, and this is thank you very much to Vint Cerf and Google who has helped support DCAD to help increase the voice and participation of persons with disabilities at the IGF, and our selection committee has found people from figi,

Uganda, Kenya, and also a group from Haiti who are here with us participating as a hub, and we are delighted to have you and to participate not only in this session but in many other workshops and sessions at the IGF. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: Thank you, Gunela. Now we get into the drink of the meeting. We've got a very, very full agenda, and you'll find the people have only four or five minutes to speak. All speakers are going to hate me by the end of the day because I'm going to have to be tyrranical about the time to ensure that people at the end have a fair amount of time. So let's get straight into it without any more ado. So what we want to know is about the experience by people with disabilities of online meetings, how have they found it, how have they found the tech nol, how have thre found all the support systems and whatever. We have three kirch speakers coming from different approaches. First is Paulina Lewandowska, so Paulina, straight over to you.

PAULINA LEWANDOWSKA: Hello, everyone. I am Paulina from Poland and actually I am PhD student in pedagogy so I am a student and have different experiences in online learning because I can see both sides of online learning as positive anding initive ones. First of all, I would like to say that, I can say that we have two kinds of challenges and difficulties. The first one is a challenge with the difficulties to get full access to the content on the lessons of the classes because when we have online classes, we need to use very fast platforms that were not adjusted to the online classes, so the problem was that sometimes teachers and students, they didn't have a good quality video and possibilities to speak clearly into microphones because we didn't have any good quality devices to attend to these kind of classes, and it was a huge problem because of this situation we had to participate in the classes with our videos. I had to be in person, so I need to use both a visual and audio session of understanding the classes, so sometimes I use -- sometimes I use really only hearing perception because it was not possible for me to see my teachers or to see students, but I had to discuss with my colleagues, with my teachers how they should communicate with me. But I also see the positive image of the online class because it was very wonderful to hear directly into my

hearing aids by using my iPhone, so I needed to buy an iPhone to use to understand the classes, and it is the expenses that it was very, very hard to manage. But to conclude, we need to know that there are both sides to distance learning, and also we need to think that also people without any disabilities have also problems with understanding classes because of their not good quality devices or Internet connections.

GERRY ELLIS: Is that it, Paulina? Peen peeb I think it was four minutes.

GERRY ELLIS: Perfect. Thank you very much for keeping to your time. I really appreciate that. We've got our next speaker who will be using a sign language interpreter so we've allocated we're going very generous. Petra, Rezar, maybe could you give us your experience, please.

GERRY ELLIS: Petra?

I'm not sure what happened to her I tried to reach her on WhatsApp also.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Let's skip to Muhammad and when he is finished maybe we can get Petra back. Muhammad, would you like to give us input from a visual impaired point of view? Four minutes. Can you give us Muhammad?

Muhammad needs to unmute if he hasn't unmuted.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR AWAN: Am I audible now?

GERRY ELLIS: Yes. Thank you, Muhammad.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR AWAN: Yes. Thank you very much. For the record this is Muhammad Shabbir Awan and welcome everybody from Pakistan and greetings everywhere. Yes, indeed, we are all living in strange times, and these times and the online IGF, this represents our case very well that all online spaces need to be accessible for everyone, regardless of disability or any other conditions that people may have.

Talking about the experience as a visually impaired of all of these 9 or 10 months. These 9 months have been very crazy, eye opening, as well as an opportunity to learn more things. Many of the applications and online platforms that I had not used earlier, I got to experience. For instance Google Meet and Teams and all of that stuff.

As a visually impaired, there were a number of challenges with different platforms. On some platforms, as a participant with vision impairment, it was difficult, for instance, with Teams to raise hands. It was difficult with Google Meet to raise hands, to unmute one's self as well, and similarly there were also experiences and not good ones. The experiences were of different institutions neglecting the needs of the accessibility for persons with disabilities. For instance, some institutions or organizations would prefer the platforms which were freely available, number one, or they would prefer the tools their people were used to using, the tools in their institutions. Some institutions were not willing to learn accessible tools to make their online meetings accessible, so this created a sort of negative impression, I should say.

On the other hand, not everything was bad. Yes, these were challenging times. These were the times that tested the patience and limits of everyone, but in these

times as a person with visual impairment who feels a bit reluctant to move around in the world, it was easier to work from home.

GERRY ELLIS: 30 seconds.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR AWAN: Yes. Not always, but yes, it was difficult sometimes. But at the same time, you cannot have everything and anything at your homes, so at the end of the day, I would say the COVID-19 got the world surprised, it caught us off guard, but I think the experiences that we are getting from these challenges should be enough to motivate the policymakers, the planners to state that accessibility is not just the need of 10 or 15 percent of the population on this earth. This can be a need of everyone. Thank you very much.

GERRY ELLIS: Thank you, Muhammad. Have we got Petra back?

Damjan will start although he's still not on camera.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. While Petra is getting ready, I'll give you a quick tip from a blind person. If you're in Zoom and you want to raise your hand, just hold the Alt Key and hit the letter Y so you don't have to hunt around looking for it. It's so quick and easy.

So when Petra is finished, we're going to have a general discussion, so raise your hand if you want to get in and our online moderators will try to keep tabs on who is trying to get in. Petra, how are you getting on this?

Dam.

DAMJAN SEBJAN: From from 14 community and I'm now present and now because of corona time Deaf couldn't communicate so Zoom was the solution that we started to use worldwide. I took on the organization to interpret to different countries, certain countries all over the world, and I was sort of a moderator and I was interpreting everything else, and everybody was very happy with it, they were checking it on Facebook, on YouTube, and everywhere. So the question is maybe why. For four years we had a conference that I was going there and I managed to contact different presidents, but a lot of Deaf couldn't join because of financial state so now because of Zoom it was possible.

The minus of the Zoom, so the negative things here are that the videos are very small, so something like that would be interesting that you could select different countries and have interpreter and speaker at the same time on the screen. That's what I would like to have as a support. And also, of course, monthly cost is quite a problem, and so some Deaf all over the world have struggled because of that, and because of lack of communication. So now I think Petra will take over. Thank you right now.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. 3 more minutes, Petra, you've got a bit of extra time.

PETRA REZAR: Could I please use the screen share? One moment. Greet. Thank you.

So the video will be very short like five seconds or so.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: You were doing it before. Oh, now it's back.

PETRA REZAR: Okay. So there are 25,000 viewers with different languages, so we would really like support to have more and more Deaf viewers. Okay. Thank you. That's it.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Thank you, Petra. Thank you for staying within time. Now let's jump, with our short time, or we can discuss what we've heard or your own experiences of online use of online tools as well. So Judith, have we got any hands up?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: I do not. I do not see any. So if people want to raise their hand, we can actually get them -- allow them to speak or they can post it into the chat or the Q&A Pod. So the Q&A Pod is either at the bottom of the screen or at the top of the screen if you're on a mobile. And so far we have no questions, but if people want to post any questionings, they can about the speakers. We'll have after that, we'll have a talk about virtual meetings. But if anyone wants to do it, you're welcome.

Oh, Peter, yes, you can make a brief comment. Thank you.

PETER CROSBIE: Yeah. I was just going to say in terms of distance learning and accessibility in the disability community that one of the things we have to take into account is basically children, so people who are under 18. Because if you look at the numbers of disabled people who are children, so up to 18, the vast majority of them are people with disabilities, are congenitive, I'm autistic so I'm born Autistic and in the American figures that I've seen there are more people with cognitive disabilities as children than all other disabilities combined. In fact, there is almost double the amount, so we tend to be there from birth and then right through, and then later on of course other disabilities that are more age related coming to -- come into play. But basically, accessibility in terms of disabilities in children, kids

with cognitive disabilities are being disproportionately having difficulties. That's all I was going to say. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: Thank you, Peter. thank you. We have a question in the chat. Oh, good. Questions are now coming into the Q&A pod. The question is to Paulina. In online classes, do Polish students get access to live captioning to support their participation?

PAULINA LEWANDOWSKA: No, we don't have because mostly students have to think about the captions and not teachers. It's mostly, and thus there is a percentage of teachers that are thinking about accessibility for people with hearing loss, but mostly the students need to think. And I am a member of the Polish organization and I can say that students and their parents are trying to contact us with their questions of how to get access to the online classes because even they don't understand the lessons. So we need to prepare a short list of access that are free and access to platforms that can be used during classes, and so unfortunately we don't have, and because Zoom or maybe Google Meet or maybe Teams, they don't provide with a good quality captions.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. So I'm sorry for cutting it off. Again, to give other people a chance, can I ask you, Judith, are there other questions there?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes, there are.

GERRY ELLIS: Thank you, Paulina.

PAULINA LEWANDOWSKA: Thank you.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: So we have a question. It's a feedback for Peter. Andy Heath would like if Peter could clarify what he mentioned.

PETER CROSBIE: Yeah. I just read something in the chat. It's basically kids with cognitive disabilities, around 4.5% of the population, and I haven't written this down, this is what I remember. Whereas most other disabilities in children, so under 18, is in the range of half a percent, .6 or .7, so cognitive disabilities, also, then that tends to stay more or less stable until much later in life when you start to get a lot more people with dementia and so on, but this 4.5% is more or less stable from childhood right through adulthood, whereas other disabilities, of course, increases through adulthood.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Thank you. We have another question from Amalia and she wants to know has the takeup of speech recognition technology increased with the use -- or during the pandemic?

GERRY ELLIS: Who would like to take that on? I can tell you myself, Gerry here, that speech recognition has always been actually quite good, but one of the things that is quite recent is the automatic production of captions, so instead of having a person captioning, you have artificial intelligence trying to interpret what's being said and producing captions at the same time. I think it's fair to say that that technology is still in its infancy. It's probably not good enough, we'll say for Deaf people or people that are hard of hearing, but it is getting better.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Thank you. We have another question from Sylvia from the MAG member also from the APNIC Foundation and she wants to know if there has been any response from the companies manufacturing these tools to incorporate the features that we have identified? Who will take that on?

GERRY ELLIS: Again, who would like to take that one?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: And if others, if maybe Shadi has an answer to that, we're happy to have him answer as well, he might know more about that than we do.

SHADI ABOU-ZAHRA: Hi, Judith and Gerry. I don't have any hard evidence or specific information on this question, but I do think there has been quite at least awareness raising, subjectively, my own impression is that there has been quite some movement toward accessibility on some of the online teleconference tool providers. My guess is that because it is being increasingly used in education and business in countries where there are accessibility requirements, and that this is having an international impact and benefit. But I think it's still very spotty and different tools provide different advantages, but I think more tools now provide some sort of captioning support than it was maybe a year or two ago.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Thank you so much. We have no more questions.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Well, we are approximately -- how far are we now? Okay. So, if we want to move on then, is there anyone else that wants to make a comment? We have about two or three minutes left if somebody wants to make a last comment?

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR AWAN: Yes, Gerry. This is Muhammad. Just adding to what Shadi has highlighted, there has been a lot of emphasis on online meetings since the pandemic started, so the organizations and institutions have come up with a lot of instructions and guidelines to make the online meetings accessible. So in a way, I know it's somewhat selfish, but I would say the pandemic has made

human people or humans realize the need and the significance of accessibility of all of these online meetings.

GERRY ELLIS: And I would add one comment that one of the driving themes -- one of the driving articles, if you want to use that word, that's driving accessibility is our international standards and international legislation, not just the UN Convention, but also I'm familiar with Europe where there is now a European Directive on axe access to public websites where there is a new one coming up now which is on accessible transport. There is one on accessibility of technology. So that's doing two things. One, it's setting the standards that people can follow because up until now, you find that people even if they want to do or make themself accessible, maybe they don't know how. So a lot of these standards and technical documents behind them are helping companies to do it. But the other thing is that governments are beginning to adopt these standards and build them into legislation, so if it a government makes -- or demands that a technology is accessible, then the technology is accessible for all. So the movement, again, is in the right direction, but again, we still have a long way to go.

Okay. Enough from me again. So can we move on, please?

We always look at accessibility of the IGF itself. It's always part of the DCAD session, and I think it's a very useful thing to do. Accessibility, I think has improved, but there are some areas that maybe it hasn't. So let's try to look at the accessibility of the IGF itself. What I want to do here is in chronological order, in a sense, so let's start at registration and the website. Let's start at accessibility to this meeting, and then talk about accessibility to other meetings that we've been at. Does anyone want to comment about registration and just the IGF website to start? We have about 15 minutes on this.

Remember to raise your hand to answer questions or use the chat box, we have all of those options.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: This is Judith. We do have a question not necessarily about this. It's not about IGF but about other meetings and Andy Heath talks about the affect on bandwidth when you have so many videos on at the same time.

GERRY ELLIS: Can you let Andy in to ask his question?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Sure.

GERRY ELLIS: Can you unmute Andy?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Hold on a minute. I have to get Andy in.

GERRY ELLIS: Just talking about standards a minute ago and Andy is a great man for standards, a very, very great advocate.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Hold on a minute. Oh, someone got him. That's good. Andy, are you allowed to talk?

ANDY HEATH: Gerry is right. Hi, Gerry, I work on a number of standards. I'm also running a number of Zoom calls for various groups, and you know, we've been playing with what we can do. And also what we can do, you may not know, for the first time in my experience, Microsoft has beaten Apple to the accessibility table on this because in Office 365, PowerPoint, there is live captioning, which you have to

be online to generate it, but you know when you're doing a Zoom presentation you can generate it.

Now, it seems to work pretty well. I kind of suspect it's Otter behind the scenes that's doing it, but of course Microsoft doesn't tell you that. But I tried it in a large group, and we had 90 plus participants, and they all had had the videos on. And basically, at that level it didn't work at all. It was completely, completely hopeless to the point where I've decided a practice to get around that next time, is to ask people to switch their videos off during presentations in order to improve the quality of the live captioning.

GERRY ELLIS: Andy, could you bring your experience to this meeting, to the IGF?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Well, I can answer that for you. So at this meeting in the IGF, if we are in meeting mode and a lot of people have their cameras on, even in Zoom the bandwidth goes up significantly, and this is also another reason why IGF has a YouTube running at the same time because YouTube compresses the videos, and so for people with low bandwidth, they can see it. YouTube will also lower the quality of the video, so the bandwidth can be seen, so that you have low bandwidth, so that is what YouTube is doing.

And Teams, Teams uses machine captioning for everything. The higher versions of Zoom do have the Otter Live and also you could buy it, itself, the business version and you could have that too going all the time. Although as a business version, one of the few companies that has a specific nonprofit rate that is 50% of the regular rate because unlike a lot of companies who don't have nonprofit rates or make you go through a corporation so that you have to join another membership, they don't. So there is a lot of other different things going on.

ANDY HEATH: Is that Otter? I do it with other accounts.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes. Otter has nonprofit rate of the business that is only $120 a year.

ANDY HEATH: $120, that's the standard rate, it's kind of a --

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: It's $240. It's $240.

GERRY ELLIS: Can I just say we're going a bit off our track here, so can we try to bring this back to IGF, so maybe a recommendation or a thought which I wonder what the meeting would agree with here. Because captions and because sign language interpreters can't be slowed down and can't operate if their bandwidth is being broken up because there are too many people at a meeting, is there a way that IGF can prioritize the access for accessibility services like sign language interpreters or captioners? Is that something that we can bring to IGF?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: I think we could have Luis, is this something that we could bring? We have to ask our technical people. Luis is, is this something that is possible in IGF?

GERRY ELLIS: It's something that we as a group can bring.

LUIS BOBO: I'm sorry, I was in two meetings in parallel. I'm sorry, if you could repeat the last part of the question.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: So the question is, is there a way of prioritizing bandwidth for the sign language interpreters or the other people that need to speak, or is it -- is there not a way?

LUIS BOBO: Yeah. Actually we're doing that. We're protecting the bandwidth for the video of the sign interpreter. This is also, we have a spotlight now for all the audience, which is like the speaker and the sign interpreter which is, in fact, being streamed to the YouTube signal.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay.

ANDY HEATH: One last point, Gerry.

GERRY ELLIS: Can I just ask, Judith, is there anyone else trying to get in. Andy with all respect, can we let someone else in and if we have time at the end I'll come back to you. Is that okay? Okay.

ANDY HEATH: That's okay.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. So Judith.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: We have a question but it's not on this issue, but I do have a couple of things that were brought to my attention prior to this by our DCAD Members, and that is that the Pre-IGF events that used to be on Day 0 and now are during this week do not have captioning, and this was not -- I think it was a communication issue, is that people assume since all the IGF events have captioning that the events during this week that were not the Dynamic Coalition,

not the Best Practice, and not one of the other main IGF events, if they were classified of Pre-IGF, they would not have captioning, and I think if we do another virtual one, that needs to be discuss and that any event held at the IGF should not -- should have equal access. That's one issue I thought.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. So can we take it that is a recommendation from our group that all of those should get accessibility services. That's fine. Okay. Judith, second one?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: There is a question where he's looking for advice and strategies from employees in order to have fairness and consideration for the integration to discussion spaces, but that will be for Q&A at a different time. It's not about this topic. But we will try to get the answers for you after the panel in writing to you.

GERRY ELLIS: Yeah. Or if we have time in Q&A at the end we might.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: We do have a question. We have one more question, Gerry. Lidia Best asks, is there a way, now that we have human captioning in English, is there also a way to showcase a machine or captioning in a language that is not in English? So that is her question.

And then I guess the other thought is that there is different sessions at this IGF that are looking at that topic itself on extinct languages, so I would look for that session.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. I think Lidia's question is not necessarily about extinct translations, but maybe just being able to translate captions. Maybe Petra might know because Petra works in more than one language. Would Petra be able to

comment? I think we may have difficulty. I don't know if Petra is still there or not. The other people that may be able to comment are the ITU who do standards and have various people from around the world. Is there somebody from ITU that might want to comment about multilingual captions or translation of captions and that sort of stuff?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: I can actually answer about that.

GERRY ELLIS: All right. Go ahead.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: So for automated captioning, there are different services that you could use to do that, and that you could actually, there is a company called Streamer Solutions and there are other different chats that have automated captioning that can do it. What Stream was supposed to be doing is they use the Google translation engine, and if you sign on to their web page and create your account, you could have it -- you could have the captioning or the voice be machine translated for you into whatever language that you set.

Now, what we don't -- what we can't tell you is whether the captioning or the translation will be accurate because it's a machine. It's not a human. Shabbir would also like to answer a question.

GERRY ELLIS: I would like to put it to Shabbir as well, but Judith could you put the name of the company into the chat box, please.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Sure. I will do that.

GERRY ELLIS: Shabbir, shoot.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR AWAN: Yes, Gerry, actually I have a comment about the accessibility of IGF, the topic we are currently talking about.

GERRY ELLIS: Excellent.

MUHAMMAD SHABBIR AWAN: So I was looking at the schedule and the interactive schedule that we have online, and the version that we have in HTML where we can use that schedule to add sessions to personal calendar, I found the previous version, the version that was during 2019 IGF, more accessible than the current one. Why I say so? Because at that time I could see all of the sessions of the whole IGF on one page and I could jump by day and by session. Because all the sessions were properly itemized using the heading levels, the different levels of headings.

This year we can see the whole schedule on one page, but I could not find the headings. Probably this might be my lack of understanding or something, but I feel that there was not the use of headings was not properly used to organize schedule, and had this been used by IGF, the schedule could have been more easier to navigate for persons with screen readers or anyone else as well. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: I would agree with that, Shabbir, and I would say the system that they had for filtering between data and inclusion and so on was quite inaccessible as well. But in general, the timetable I thought was good. We have about a minute left.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Gerry we have one question from Joly MacFie. Hold on a minute. I have to get him.

JOLY MACFIE: I should be good. I just wanted to say about translation that StreamText has a function where you can enable Google Translate within Streamtext and it just costs money, but if you want to you could order it from Caption First and it just means that you could then go to StreamText to the page and get a drop-down that gives you another language.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Luis, can I ask you are we capturing what's going into the chat box?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes, we are.

GERRY ELLIS: Joly could I ask you to put a comment into the chat box and it will be captured there. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to move on because we're behind on schedule, unusually for a meeting like this, and I'm delighted at that so I want to try to keep it on schedule. So I'm going to move on and thank you for that discussion because it roamed far and wide and I thought it was very good.

So Gunela, you want to tell us about a best practice form for accessibility? What is one of them and how does it work? Please?

GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Gerry. Fantastic that we're right on time, so yes, the IGF has a number of best practice forums that are co-sponsored by the MAG, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, I'm a member of that, and they have been operating for a number of years. So one example is the best practice on gender, and we have Sylvia here as well who is a MAG member as well, and she has

been working on a proposal for environmental data governance and a proposal for a best practice forum on that. She also has a lot of experience having been on the MAG for three years now, and I'm going to ask her to speak in a minute, but the idea is to consider that DCAD could put in a proposal for a best practice forum on accessibility. And what that means is that we've just heard about all the different issues relating to accessibility of the schedule, the website for IGF, and we want to work proactively with IGF now that there will be the development of a new website to act as a model for how to engage a person with a disability to work together with a team in the web content development, and also to base that on the current UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, so we do have the existing policies, and it's really a matter of how the IGF could be a model for developing accessible online tools for persons with disabilities, and that could be used by other UN agencies. So there is a lot of considerations here, and we are interested in comments about that and maybe getting support on how to move forward.

But I will ask I Sylvia to speak about her experiences of best practice forums in the IGF to give us that background. So, thank you, Sylvia.

GERRY ELLIS: Sylvia, six minutes, okay.

SYLVIA CADENA: Thank you, Gunela. When I joined the IGF three years ago as a MAG Member, there was a conversation that started about how the best practice forums that are currently happening at the IGF as intersessional activities had a term or how they were approved to continue or were selected, because as you know the BPFs and dynamic coalitions, as they grow, they require support from the IGF Secretariat and especially during the face-to-face meetings, the allocation of time and resources to support their meetings into the agenda. Right.

So there, you know, to be inclusive of all the topics and other groups that want to bring new issues to the IGF, there was a process that started in to kind of draft

some guidelines about how to bring new BPFs into new intersessional work into the IGF, and how that work can be linked to the activities and the outcomes that the IGF is doing.

So there is at the moment a BPF, own BPF, there is a session happening in the next few days. I will find the link and send it to you later so that you can join that one where the guidelines in the new process that say it's going to be introduced and gather some input. And the incoming MAG will be in the process of approving -- reviewing those guidelines and approving them for adoption. So taking advantage of those new guidelines to be developed, we started a process to structure a BPF on environmental data governance as Gunela mentioned, in trying to stick to those guidelines as much as possible to make it easy for the MAG to approve it for next year, and hopefully that will happen. So we'll see how that one goes.

So my recommendation to this Dynamic Coalition and those interested in working around a BPF in how to link that to the new IGF website is to first start by discusses the initial guidelines that are currently under review that have not been yet adopted by the MAG to see what you see in those guidelines that might prevent your idea to move forward so that those recommendations can be made before the guidelines are approved. The MAG is incredibly supportive of being more inclusive in finding an opportunity to discuss with the local hosts how to incorporate these technology, and that is why also I asked the question about what companies are doing to respond to the requirements that you have identified, especially during this crazy COVID times where all of the digital transformation process was kind of pushed a lot faster.

So, I guess the discussion that you're having and the clear and concrete recommendations that your group is coming up with, can be you know, discussed by the MAG. You have a fantastic advocate with Gunela in the MAG dealing with this and highlighting in every single step how important the accessibility is, and also support from the MAG Chair that is absolutely supportive of this effort, and so I

think that there is a level of maturity, let's say, both in technology, and also in how these things come together, and hopefully that will be possible. The funding for the design of the website is in a grant from the UK Government and they do have accessibility requirements in mind so that is also another strategy.

The part that I'm not that sure is if -- is because the BFPs are, you know, looking at best practices and discuss best practices from a variety of organizations during a pertd of time, let's say, if they approve the two-year term, it's to analyze what's going on in that period and kind of have a picture, let's say, of how that looks in time. Right. I don't know if that analysis and that review might be in time for the design of the IGF website, so maybe one thing that -- one alternative that I'm not sure how it can work, could be to do that BPF in that proposal but complemented by trying to organize a Working Group as part of the MAG and work more closely with the Secretariat in this design. Thank you very much for your time and for giving me a minute to share my experiences. I'm in awe by seeing the interpreters and all the hurdles that you guys have to jump to be able to participate, and I am very humbled by this experience and I promise to do my best to make the work that we do at the APNIC foundation more inclusive as well. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: Thank you, Sylvia. Can I ask you a quick question before you go? Can we -- can we circulate the draft guidelines freely amongst the DCAD and other people for comments?

SYLVIA CADENA: Yes, the guidelines are on the IGF website so give me a few minutes and I will post them in the chat ? As I finish talking, I can't do two things at the same time. (Laughing).

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. We will circulate those at a later date. Thank you, Gunela, and thank you Sylvia, that's really interesting and particularly that the website is going

to have a particular emphasis on accessibility. We've been looking for that for years, so that's wonderful. Thank you both very, very kindly.

Again, it's time to move on, so now an important part of the IGF are national and regional initiatives, so these are if you like, many IGFs in regional areas of the world or whatever. So we're going to hear about experiences from that from Judy Okite and Judith Hellerstein. So maybe Judy, do you want to to take the lead here?

JUDY OKITE: Thank you very much, Gerry. Judy Okite from Nairobi, Kenya. We have been working, and we have work plan as DCAD to work together with the national and regional initiatives, and one of our main agenda is to ensure that persons with disabilities are part of their national and regional initiatives. It's easier to achieve a discussion when we begin from that lower level that these persons with disabilities can be able to address their accessibility needs when it comes to their disability, even to their -- at their local level, and in that way they will be the persons in charge of their local level will be able to understand what it is that is needed.

And so one of DCAD is to reach out to the national and regional initiatives and to be able to share what issues they could be having to ask the questions of what it is that they could be having, how could we be of assistance to them? In our DCAD website, we have accessibility guidelines that are available for anyone to use, especially when it comes even to the virtual meetings and even to the physical meetings of what it is that we mean when it comes to accessibility. And as we are right now, we have developed a survey whereby, we are asking for feedback on how accessibility has been to you in this year that most of the meetings have been virtual? Have you had your national meeting? Have you had your regional meeting? What was the accessibility needs? And we would really appreciate if we could have our feedback from you. We will collate that feedback and then we plan to have a meeting with the national regional coordinators in December when the IGF is done with, but we can be able to share back the feedback and to be able to

just discuss together how is it that we can work better to ensure that the meetings in 2021 IGF are beginning from the local level to the global level to make them all accessible for persons with disabilities. And I think even that answers one of the questions that was asked from Haiti, that she was asking. I don't know whether it's a she or a he, but asking how the persons with disabilities can engage into these spaces. It is simply by beginning to engage at the local level. Do you have a national IGF? If you do not have one, then begin building on one. The IGF website has all the guidelines on how to come up with a national initiative, and so let's invite more persons with disabilities into these discussions. That is the only way that we can be able to understand the accessibility needs because sometimes we might say that there is no accessibility needs in these meetings, but the persons who do not have that need might not really know what it is that you require, so let's engage, let's have the persons with disabilities being part of this forum. We welcome you to join the DCAD list where we have different meetings to discuss the accessibility and people share their experiences on what they've done and what they're doing even on regarding the policies that are available at national level at a global level, when it comes to accessibility for persons with disability.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Thanks so much, Judy, for that. I will also put in that it is one of the other things that groups who are helping to fund the NRIs, we have two organizations. We have the IGF Support Association who also gives some sponsorship and grant be money to help national and regional initiatives with NRIs to fund and help run their events. Also, the Internet Society, its chapters are able to get grants for that, and we have been the -- within the Internet Society, there is a special accessibilities special interest group that is around and we are actually the Secretariat for DCAD, but we have been working with the Internet Society Foundation to get on the application form that these chapters apply for funding for these IGFs, for the national and regional IGFs to get some kind of increased awareness so that when the people who are applying for funds, our hope is that we can get some comments on the form that is filled out so that they're aware, oh, we should be looking towards increasing awareness for these people with disabilities, whether it's through captioning, human captioning or through some other type of format. The idea is just to raise the awareness, and it's only through raising the

awareness that people realize that we need to engage with everyone, just like people years ago continue raising the awareness that English is not the only language that they need to have speech interpreted. Now we have sign language and we want that. We want captioning. We just need to raise awareness, and our approach is how do we raise awareness of this.

GERRY ELLIS: The other thing, Judith, is that we can learn from each other because some are further down the line than others, so we can find a way of saying one NRI, one national or region can help support one another and learn from their experience rather than reinventing the wheel.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes. Exactly. And a lot of people say well we don't have funding for this, but what we did in the IGF USA is when I took this on, we decided to be creative and we created, and although our sponsorship is very neutral and people do not get their names on specific sessions, it's just as a whole, but since captioning was not included, we created a separate branding so captioning is provided by X, and we sold that idea to different organizations that they for a very reasonable fee could be having their name branded on this, so it would be captions provided by X, and in the IGF USA, it's captioning is provided by one of our other organizations, and then they have a branded idea. So it's a really cheap branding idea and a lot of corporations would hike that, but you just have to figure out how do I bring it to them in their language. How do I get them interested in this.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Judith. I'm afraid we're going to have to leave it at that and move on if that's okay.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes, I'm done.

GERRY ELLIS: Oh, you are now. (Laughing). I've made an executive decision, everybody. I've made an executive decision. The next piece is called Mainstreaming Accessibility. Oh, I'm sorry, it's called Dynamic Coalition Liaison and it's Judith again, but to give Judith a breath and to have a change of voice, I've going to just swop that around with the following item. So Main streaming Accessibility, Shadi and Peter Crosbie, do you mind going now, just jump ahead and do that now and then we'll have a change of voice and then go back to Judith. Is that okay? Can we have Shadi and Peter in place?

SHADI ABOU-ZAHRA: Hi, Gerry. This is Shadi. Yes, that's okay, and I hope that's okay for Peter too. So, yeah, I guess this discussion has been going on in the DCAD Group for a while about having accessibility.

(meeting ended).

(message that host has another meeting in progress).

LUIS BOBO: So this is Luis Bobo United Nations. I'm sorry for this, Gerry. Apparently there has been a accident and someone else stopped this room and started a new one. This should not have happened. Please continue here. I hope that we can recover all the people and they will rejoin. Okay. Sign interpretation is fine again. And captioning should be fine again.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. We'll give it just a minute for people to get back in.

LUIS BOBO: Very I'm sorry for there. It should not have happened.

GERRY ELLIS: Do we know how many participants we have?

Currently 19.

GERRY ELLIS: 19. Okay. I think we had about 30. Should we just give it a minute.

We had about 47 at one point.

GERRY ELLIS: Shadi and Peter, are they here?

LUIS BOBO: Yeah, they are here.

GERRY ELLIS: Can you give them rights, please. And Judith and Gunela. Gunela is there, Judith is there. Judith is not there. Gunela, yes. Sign interpreters are there. Captioner is there.

Hi, Gerry. Did I break the Internet?

GERRY ELLIS: I won't comment. Did you shave this morning? What could do you like like? (Laughing).

Sign language interpreters here. If we could be given multiple permission again, please. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: Most people only crack the camera, Shadi.

SHADI ABOU-ZAHRA: Yeah. (Laughing).

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. Are we ready to start recording and captioning again?

LUIS BOBO: It is started. Everything is started.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. So Shadi, can you start again, please. I'm sorry to everyone for the interruption. Some external force broke our meeting and took over our room, so Luis has sorted it out, thanks to Luis, so we're going to try to get going again and we'll see we might rob a bit of time at the end. Shadi, back to yourself and Peter. Mainstreaming accessibility, please.

SHADI ABOU-ZAHRA: Thanks, Gerry. Thank you for clarifying, I thought it was something I said and so you kicked me out because I know you're very strict. (Laughing). So just to come back to the topic. We've been discussing in the Dynamic Coalition of Accessibility and Disability in DCAD for quite a while the aspect of not speaking amongst ourselves. I mean, it is important that we focus on making the IGF accessible and inclusive for everyone. That is one of our main objectives. Also, another objective is to promote exchange, knowledge exchange amongst us, amongst people in the field of accessibility and disability, but I think equally as important is to reach out to other -- to other Dynamic Coalitions and other activities across the IGF and make sure that accessibility is included as a horizontal and considered throughout.

I think for many years we haven't been seeing as many accessibility sessions. But I think I'm really delighted this year that I do see quite some sessions that are not

necessarily organized by members of DCAD, and also topics that I haven't seen as much in previous years. For example, on Monday morning, there is a session that I'm really looking forward to called Open Data for Women and Persons with Disabilities, just as an example. There are several others in the agenda that do talk more about inclusion and universal design, but here just you know, very often people may not at first think about data as something that is related to accessibility and disability. Whereas, it is. It's very relevant, it's very important, especially in our world where we're talking about artificial intelligence bias against people with disabilities or other marginalized groups. I think there is also a lot that we can learn from gender activities and gender studies and try to promote inclusion or accessibility as the big umbrella of inclusion.

So, yeah. I think one of the things that we've been trying to do this year is attend more other sessions and try to bring accessibility if they have not already considered accessibility, to try to bring in discussions of accessibility and raise use cases there and alert them that some of the topics that they might be discussing like copyright, like human rights and ethics in digital technology, all of these aspects do relate to people with disabilities just as well, and maybe even disproportionately so.

This year has been particularly difficult. On the one side, online makes it really easy to switch rooms from one to the other once you've overcome the hurdles of actually getting the links in the inbox, and that's a separate story, but the idea is that with the online you can be in multiple places and switch.

But the issue is really that speaking from the floor and connecting with the panel or even grabbing them for a coffee afterwards and chatting with them does not work as much online. So this comes back maybe to a broader issue about the pros and cons of the online aspect of IGF. On the one side, I think it's great that we can have more access and peamtion from around the world, on the other hand it's a bit

more difficult to get this interpersonal and human exchange, and so I guess I'll leave it there because we're tight on time, but the question I guess for the Dynamic Coalitions, beyond trying to attend other Dynamic Coalition meetings and other meetings beyond the quote, you unquote traditional accessibility and disability, what else can we do to get accessibility more in the minds of people? What can we do to really change the culture towards accessibility across the IGF?

GERRY ELLIS: So, Peter, did you want to jump in?

PETER CROSBIE: Yes. I mean, I'll leave my video off because for people that don't know me, I'm Autistic so this level of interaction is right at the limit of what someone like me can handle. In fact, these kind of platforms like Zoom and so on, in general, are fairly inaccessible for people with cognitive disabilities for a whole lot of reasons. So on the one hand, they're great and I'd much prefer to be sitting here doing this than at a live IGF conference which for someone like me is really overwhelming, but on the other hand, even Zoom and so on has not been designed for people with cognitive disabilities in mind. It's a fairly overwhelming and a fairly intense experience, that as I said is the real limit.

I was just going to make a couple of points about mainstreaming and to pick up on that, and to pick up on something that Shadi just said about data as an accessibility related. And certainly from the point of view of cognitive accessibility, everything, basically, is accessibility related. Design and layout are accessibility issues, user interface is an accessibility issue. Content itself, so for example even how long or short a sentence is accessibility issues. One of the big ones, especially, is login, password, privacy, web security, all of that are real not so much even accessibility issues but as much as accessibility barriers for someone like me.

And so when we're talking about mainstreaming accessibility, what we need to be looking at is that basically every aspect of putting content online is an accessibility

issue and it's just at the moment we're not recognizing it as such. So we need to reframe some of that. For example, seeing a good design is also meaning good accessibility, and not seeing them as two separate and often competing considerations.

The other just small second point I would make about mainstreaming is just to look at who we're talking about here because mainstreaming implies bringing people who are outside the mainstream into it. But certainly when it comes to cognitive disabilities, we're already inside it's just that we're invisible and we're not only invisible to you, but also invisible in most cases to ourselves because, for example, 90% of adults who are Autistic do not have a diagnosis, for people with ADHD that figure is about 80%, and even something as common and well-known as dyslexia, it's around two-thirds of people with dyslexia don't have a diagnosis. It's not just that they don't have a diagnosis, it's that you don't even know that you have a disability. So accessibility has to be mainstreamed because we are the mainstream. It's not a disability issue, it's not a medical issue. It's a social issue. It's about making a choice about who in our society we include and who we exclude.

GERRY ELLIS: You are absolutely right. It's something I always say. If it's as normal for a society to include people with disabilities as to include people without disabilities so you're absolutely dead right.

Judith, you were going to talk about liaisons with other dynamic coalitions. Can we make this very short and maybe we'll do a one-page document after it and circulate it, so can you give me just one minute or so so we have enough time at the end to see if there is any other business.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes, and I think we can extend by like 5 minutes.

GERRY ELLIS: We'll see in the moment.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes. So one of the things that we also wanted to do in raising awareness to people about the DCAD is to also raise our awareness within the different dynamic coalitions. So there are a growing number, more than 20 different dynamic coalitions and they each -- they grow every year. So what we've tried to do is to create a liaison for most of these and I will just find -- I will share the screen here. This is the document that we have that has a listing of what the different dynamic coalitions are, and what we've done is to try to get members of DCAD such as myself, such as Gunela, such as Shadi and Dierdra to sign up to be a liaison to one of these dynamic coalitions. So, that is one of the things that we're trying to do to raise awareness so that when these dynamic coalitions are meeting or on the email lists, that accessibility issues could be raised within them and it's all an effort to get increased awareness. So I will just stop sharing this screen and post a link into the chat.

GERRY ELLIS: Okay. And hopefully afterwards, we can maybe write to people on here and see who is interested. Because I think if you look at the last three subjects here, the national/regional initiatives, the Dynamic Coalition liaison, and Shadi and Peter's talk. They're all about us coalecing and talking and hopefully intersecting and influencing other groups so hopefully we can try to get that moving over the next year. Okay. Thanks, Judith.

Before we go on, we're just about at the end of our time, but can I ask the kachtioners captioners, are we okay to go on for five or six more minutes? Is that okay? I. Let's use the five or six minutes for any other business. So what do you want to raise, what do you want to bring up with us? And Andy, I promise to come back to you so I'll give to you -- is Andy back on eye.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes, he is but let me just allow, Andy, you can talk now. Can we give Andy a shot because I promised him.

ANDY HEATH: Well, in fact, mynext question was going to be what I'm calling best practices, but I'm told I should call good practices now, and I think that was adequately answered in the subsequent discussion. I think one of the problems here though is that really right now we need, really, really need good practices for particular platforms and particular context, you know, particular use cases for meetings. And I think this is very, very difficult to do in any kind of international or national way because, you know, vendors don't like it when you tell people, okay, look, this is wrong with your platform and we're going to get around it like this. You know, they tend not to like that. I don't know if anybody has any solutions to that point?

GERRY ELLIS: One of the solutions, Andy, is standards and you're highly involved. Do you want to say something about standards?

ANDY HEATH: Yes. Absolutely. Standards don't solve that problem. You cannot run down vendors in standards. You can't. You can't do it. Okay. So it's not a solution to that problem and everybody ends up moving around the real problem and is the devil is in the detail and we all know that aI don't have a solution to do that. I'm happy to talk about standards at another meeting, Gerry.

GERRY ELLIS: Yeah. Another day. Judith, anyone else have their hand up? Remember, to put up your chat or the chat box or the question and answer box. We have about 5 minutes.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: No, but oh, yes Sylvia, let me just see if -- yeah, Sylvia, you can say something.

SYLVIA CADENA: Thank you, Judith. I just wanted to say that maybe another option to engage with the manufacturers is you know, they consider standards as part of the interoperability with other platforms and systems, and in many cases that actually takes the edge, let's say, off their marketing advantage. So one of the things that this group could do is to pitch the incorporation of these features as a marketing advantage so that they can reach out to wider population that is working from home, that is participating in the digital economy, and that is supported by the different regulations to be incorporated into society in an inclusive manner, so I think that if the pitch could be switched to be on the positive side and not the other side, maybe that could have another impact.

The other thing to consider is that a lot of these companies are adopting software methodologies that are working into doing small increments they call it, around short periods of time. One of those methodologies is agile for software development, but there are several of those and they're actually welcoming these small increments as they call them for improvements of the features that they have, so I encourage you to structure those -- structure that pitch in a way that is a little bit more attractive for those in the private sector and look for Allies in that respect and that might have a different outcome. Finger's crossed.

GERRY ELLIS: Another positive approach that was published on December 3 two years ago was a result of Accentuer's research on accessibility that showed the clear economic benefits to business of including a wide variety of potential users of their products and services, so we could maybe circulate that if people are interested.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Yes. That would be a great idea. If you could post that link in the chat. We have a question from Andy Heath.

ANDY HEATH: Again just to address the standards point. There are a lot of issues with standards. One of the biggest ones is they're written necessarily in standard ease which is gobbley to most people because they're written for vendors and technical people and most people cannot read standards. Okay. And the stage at which you actually publicize them and write them fl in a form which is useful to ordinary people which is actually what we really need gets skimped or ignored or whatever because it's not funded. What we need is a lot more is -- there are some good standards out there and I've got my name on some of them, they like you to put your name on them, but what we actually need is a lot of roll out of those standards in terms ordinary people can understand and say, yes, that's a good idea.

GERRY ELLIS: Yes, standards are voluntary, and we need people to say well standards are a way of achieving what we want to do so we've got to get to do is decide what they want to do is to include us, and then standards are just a way of doing it rather than the stick.

One last speaker before we finish. One last person?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: Judy has one short comment to make.

GERRY ELLIS: Judy, last but not least.

JUDY OKITE: Thank you very much. Just to say something about the question that was asked about persons with disabilities in the workplace. Maybe one way that you could approach is if there is a policy regarding persons with disabilities at workplace, if it's not there, please draft it and engage all the stakeholders at the workplace and then draft a way of how to implement it. Thank you.

GERRY ELLIS: Thraw. With that I'm going to call ladies and gentlemen, 2020 is one strange year, COVID-19 throughou. It's a strange meeting but a wonderful meeting. I think we covered so much ground in a short time and we even had a little coffee break in the middle. An unexpected one. But I think what it does show is that there are as Shadi said, there benefits to online, disadvantages, benefits to physical meetings, but disadvantages, particularly for many people with disabilities because of physical access ptroblems or whatever, and if we can get a good mixture and make sure that our needs are taken into account in both, we will certainly benefit. I'm not going to thank anyone by name because if I do I'll forget names. So I'll thank everyone in the DCAD who contributed over the last two or three months, and I'm not going to name names, but you know who you were and you know that you did a wonderful job. Thanks to the IGF Secretariat and the Technical Staff. Thanks to Google for the financial support to help people who otherwise could not have been here. And most of all, thanks to everyone that turned up today. I think it's been a great meeting. And I look forward already to Poland in 2021. Thank you.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN: And also thanks for the sign language interpreters as well as the captioners.

GERRY ELLIS: Absolutely. I should have said that. Thank you. Thank you, everyone bye-bye.